

Christian Supports
UNDER THE
TERRORS of DEATH,

A
S E R M O N

Preached to
Sir *John* F R I E N D in *Newgate*,
Preparatory to his Sufferings.

BY
SHADRACH COOKE

Priest of the Church of *England*.

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By

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SHADRACH COOKE

Minister of the Church of England

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UNDER THE

TERRORS of DEATH.

PSALM. XXIII. 4.

*Yea tho I walk through the Valley of the
Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil,
for thou art with me.*

THAT mighty and continual care which the Divine Providence hath over us, is very gratefully represented by such soft and tender expressions, and characters of God, as do bespeak an abundant Affection and regard for us, giving us all the assurance and security imaginable of an infinite kindness and compassion constantly engaged for us.

So when our Lord doth comfort his Disciples with the Doctrine of Providence, he thus expresseth it, *Your heavenly Father knoweth, that you have need of all these Things.* Matt. 6. 32. What can be dearer and more solicitous than the Affections and concernment of a Parent? Another of the like kind to the same end and purpose, is here mention'd and apply'd by *David*, who seems to assure or challenge to himself, the extraordinary care and protection.

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tection of God, under all, the very worst circumstances, from the futable character of Kindness and and Indearment he ascribes to him, *ver. 1. The Lord is my Shepherd*, and thence makes this natural Inference, *I shall not want*. He will most certainly take care of me, for to continue the Parallel or Similitude here before us, *ver. 2. He maketh me lie down in green Pastures*, or, *Pastures of tender Grass*, *he leadeth me beside still Waters*, or *Waters of quietness*: Which is spoken with allusion to the most grateful things or conditions, that God will bestow upon, or provide for his People; his goodness will take care, that they shall have what is most proper and convenient for them. And when they are brought to any distress, he will deliver them out of it, reduce them to a happy condition, and set them right and safe in their wayes, *ver. 3. He restoreth my Soul*, *he leadeth me in the Paths of righteousness for his Names sake*, and which is more, when they are under the most unpromising circumstances, in that sad and doleful condition, which we must all come to and lie under, the dismal pressure and stroke of Death; even herein the People of God are relieved and supported by this extraordinary Divine care and Goodness; *Yea, tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me*.

In which words are two things considerable:

First, The terror or severity of a dying State, *Yea, tho I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death*.

Yet Secondly under such dismal circumstances God doth most abundantly comfort and support us; *Yea, tho I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me*.

First, 'Tis observable, that holy David doth here remember us of the terror and severity of a Dying

the Terroirs of Death.

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ing State or Condition; *Yea tho I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death*; which is greatly signified by almost every word in it, *Yea* נַי *etiamsi*, Notwithstanding, imploying the utmost distress or extreimity, I walk אֶלֶךְ *ambulavero*, I shall walk; intimating a leasurely, and so a more tormenting passage, בְּנֵי *in Valle*, the *Septuagint* ἐν μέσσω in the middle, the depth or extreimity of the shadow of death צֶלְמֵרָח, *in Valle umbræ lethalis*, in the thickest of the deadly shade, i. e. *in ipsissimâ & profundissimâ mortis umbrâ*, in the deepest and utmost shade or sorrow of death. The Words here faith one, *Notat horribilem quandam mortis speciem & figuram (qualis morientium oculis observatur) tritissimam.* It denotes a very horrid appearance of death, and that most dismal apprehension of it, which Men usually have when they come to die, every way beset with horror and distraction, in a word, a terrible and approaching destruction, (*qui enim ad umbram accedit non longe à corpore abest*) He that is in the shadow, is not far from that Substance, or thing it self.

Thus the *Psalmist* represents a dying State as most severe and terrible, agreeable to what he tells us of it from his own experience, *My heart is sore pained within me, and the pains of death are fallen upon me, fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror, or as it is in the other Translation, an horrible dread hath overwhelmed me.* Psa. 55. 4, 5.

Death, or rather the preliminary passage to it, and the way into the other World, is attended with great horror and affliction, and is beyond expression harsh and terrible; to which *Job* may have some reference, when he saith, *O that my* Chap. 6. 3, 4.
grief

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grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the ballances together, for now it will be heavier than the sand of the Sea, therefore my words are swallowed up (that is, I want words to express my grief) for the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit, the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. And that this was the utmost extremity of distress or affliction, he could think of, appears from that Standard of Sorrow, which he makes it, Chap. 24. 17. If one know them, they are in the terrours of the shadow of death, which he therefore calls The King of Terrors. The greatest of all humane Evils or Miseries. And now that great terrour and severity, which doth accompany a dying State or Condition, may be occasioned;

First, From the pains or agonies of it.

Secondly, Mens misgiving thoughts of their future State.

Thirdly, Their foregoing all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this World.

Fourthly, The sence of Guilt or Sin, that will then crowd in upon us.

Fifthly, The more and greater Assaults of our Spiritual Adversary.

Sixthly, The thoughts and conviction of an ensuing Judgment, Upon all which accounts our dying Circumstances will appear sufficiently dreadful and terrible.

The first great terrour of Death doth arise *FROM THE PAINS OR AGONIES THAT USUALLY ATTEND IT*; For however it is to appearance, there may be, its very likely, even in the smoothest passage from this to the other World, some rugged and uneven paths, which can be perceived

ved by none, but those that tread them, certain it is that in the general there is a great deal of hardship and difficulty at such a time, and in such Circumstances as these, from those pains and sorrows which do naturally attend that condition, for in loosing that knot, in dissolving the close Conjunction of Soul and Body, there must be, and we have reason to say there is, a great deal of unconceivable Anguish and Affliction, 'tis an extream violence to Nature, and the utmost contradiction to it. And therefore must mightily fret and molest us, for whence (but from the most horrid pain and uneasiness) can proceed such extravagant convulsions, cold sweats, deadly faintings, short breathings, distraction of the Eyes, and other dreadful Agonies that attend it? For if these and the like, which we observe in daily Spectacles of Mortality are dreadful to behold; What must they be to those poor Creatures that do, and to us that shall suffer under them? And therefore a good man, that is not afraid of death, can't but shrink and tremble to think of the way to it, that is beset with such horror and distraction in every particular; O my God, may be the language of the most pious Soul, I am willing to die and prepared for thee, being *desirous to depart and to be with Christ*, which is better than a continuance here, but my greatest concern is, how to come to thee on the other Shore, there is a great Gulf between us, I must be toss'd on a boisterous Sea, and wrack'd by dreadful Wayes, and Tempests. Is there no way to Canaan, but through a desolate *Wilderness*, and must I go through *the valley of the Shadow of Death*, to that Land which flows with Milk and Honey, that Heavenly

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Jerusalem? These are things contrary to Flesh and Blood, and such as will make the stoutest courage faint and tremble, the pains and terrors of death can't be exprest or conceived by any but who are past or under them. And doubtless the holy Spirit of God doth in some measure intimate to us the sadness of them, when it mentions it as a great blessing to men that it is appointed to them, but *once to die*, and that there shall be *no more death* in the other State. One undoubted priviledge whereof, is, that there shall be no more of those dreadful forerunners or concomitants of it, where are sorrows so severe and terrible as endanger the safety of our Souls as well as Bodies, by urging us to impatience, distrust, and the like; thence says our Church, *suffer us not at our last hour through any pains of death to fall from thee.* Our greatest troubles and most dangerous conflict in this World is usually our departure out of it; so that to this case also we may apply that of the Prophet, *The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty Men shall cry therein bitterly, That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.*

Heb. 9. 27.

Rev. 21. 4.

Zeph. 1. 14, 15.

Thus the Pains and Agonies of a dying State render it most terrible and dreadful.

Secondly, It will appear again to be so, **FROM MENS MISGIVING THOUGHTS OF THEIR AFTER STATE.** I do not mean their doubtfulness of it, for I am apt to think, that the greatest pretenders that way are sufficiently con-

the Discourse of Death

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convinced when they come to die, and the sense of that their languishing Condition will soon rub up their Belief of another Life; but now most or all Men are under no small Distress and Perplexity from the conviction and consideration of that future Life, for which none is sufficiently fitted and prepared, but hath reason, especially from himself, to have some diffidence, some distrust or suspicion of his condition in it, and it is what becometh a prudent and a good Man; for an over-weening opinion of our selves, and a confident presumption of our preparation for Heaven may be ill grounded and mistaken, and seems to be inconsistent with a truly devout and penitent Soul. *Be not high minded but fear*, is the Rule that such go by even in these circumstances. We must be sensible, and ought to be especially so, when we come to die, That we have had a great work to do in a little time; and being that God now calls us to *give up an account of our Stewardship*, it must put us into very great Fear and Consternation to think with our selves what we have done, and whither we are going, and how can we but suspect our condition, when we consider that we are not able to *answer God one word in a thousand*, must it not then most deeply concern, and mightily affect our Souls, to consider that near approach to their endless and unalterable State, and the best of Men may have some Fear or Suspicion at least of their Condition in it. This now is their grand Affair, and if they fail and miscarry here they are irrevocably gone and lost for ever: Who then can avoid being concerned at this great and weighty change, when he thinks

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thinks with himself, that he is now hasting into another World, and at the Gate of Eternity, though he fears not Death, yet the Apprehensions of another State must strike a damp into his Soul, and make him hugely serious and perplexed in his Thoughts; *Men's Hearts failing them for fear* of what may become of them in another State. Nor is it blamable or unchristian to be so, for besides what Reason the best of Men may have to suspect themselves, such a Temper as this, will dispose us for all due Care and Circumspection in that most solemn time and season, and such an humble distrust of our selves may and will have better Effects, than a very daring confidence and presumption: For the comfort of good Men, at the most depending upon Hope, doth shew that at the best they lie under some Doubtfulness and Insecurity: And therefore as you see Men's misgiving thoughts, as to a future State, is no small Trouble and Perplexity to them in their dying Circumstances.

Thirdly Their Trouble herein doth further arise, *FROM THE THOUGHTS OF PARTING WITH ALL THE PLEASURES AND ENJOYMENTS HERE BELOW.* Men that have lived in the World must needs have some interest and affections fixed in it, and there is scarce any that do or can sit so loose to these secular Affairs, as to bear the removal from *them* with an even and undisturbed Spirit; nay so far is it from this, that these frequently prove the most pungent Considerations or Reflections in that dismal State; *Have I, saith one, laboured all my Life time for nothing but Vanity and Vexation*

tion of Spirit, for I find it to be so now; I am to be removed, and to be taken from it: For this have I beat my Brains, wearied and molested myself, for this have I cheated and purloin'd, for this have I over-reach'd or supplanted my Brother, wrong'd or oppress'd my Neighbour, and must I be deprived of all in a moment? What sorrow like to my sorrow will the Worldling say? And those pleasures that others have too much indulged, will but the more perplex their Thoughts when they are thus forced from them; nay, even the moderate and lawful enjoyment of these things, will occasion in us no small trouble and vexation of mind, at this final parting with them: Tho it behoves us to do it with Christian courage, and Resignation, yet we cannot without extream sorrow and concernment say at that time, *Farewel Wife farewel Children, farewel Friends, farewel the World finally farewel whatever was here dear and valuable.* And give me leave to add, the more have been Mens comforts, and those of good Men have been the most and truest, the more and greater must be the grief and concernment, for that utter removal, and dismal separation from them.

Fourthly, The troubles of a dying State must be again very great, **FROM THE SENSE OF SIN OR GUILT THAT WILL THEN CROWD IN UPON US.** However we may forget God and our selves in a time of Health and Prosperity, when these decline or forsake us, we are usually brought to a sober Sense, and in such a languishing State and Condition can hardly avoid it; Conscience, if ever, will certainly awake when we come to die, and we may have observed the greatest Affliction that Men have then suffer'd under, was their not being able to avoid their own thoughts, which are now more bitter and terrible than ever, (and by the way 'tis

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Isa. 57.
20, 21.

not only Justice, but withal Goodness in God to make it so.) Now the Mind has quick and unbiass'd Reflections on its own Actions, and sets forth its Guilt in true and proper Colours, and therefore the Apostle may well say, *The sting of Death is Sin.* No terror in this State like that which doth redound to us from our guilty Consciences which have now got us under hold, and will lash us severely. We can't now disguise or dissemble our Guilt, there is no stifling of it by Riot or Intemperance; lewd and loose Company can divert us no longer; all the live-long day our sins will plague and fret us, and in the wearisom nights, when we count every minute, our Guilt will rush in upon our thoughts, attend us in every turn and motion, and render our Souls as restless and uneasie as our Bodies. If what the Prophet saith of wicked Men be true at other times, 'tis much more so at this, *That they are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up Mire and Dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* When we come to die, the greatest melancholy that shall then seize our Spirits, will be from the heavy load and burden of our sins, that will be ready to oppress and sink our Souls. Then we shall find that threatning verified in us, *I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine Eyes.* And what grief or anguish can be comparable to that, which redounds from this? When we are going hence, and God gives us warning to remove, must it not concern and afflict us beyond all thought or expression, to consider the danger our Sins have now brought us to? They hide God's Face and Mercy from us, and in our greatest Distress and highest need of Comfort, threaten us with utter Ruin and Destruction; and nothing now can be so cutting and

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and intollerable as the thoughts of a displeased and angry God. And well may that be so to us which was the greatest of our Saviours troubles, for at his dying hour, the guilt of our sins that lay on him, occasioned the bitterest Agony of his Soul, and that dismal exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* Most certainly the sense of guilt will be the bitterest Portion, and the very dregs of that *Cup of trembling*; our Hearts will faint, and our Souls will *sink within us*, and we shall shake and fear, and cry *mightly*, and have on us such passionate concernment as is inexpressible, from the dismal apprehension of the Divine Wrath and Indignation which our sins have kindled and provoked against us. So that hereupon it may be said with *Cain, My punishment is greater than I can bear.* Gen. 4. 13.

Fifthly, The troubles of a dying state will appear further considerable, **FROM THE ASSAULTS OF OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMY, WHICH WILL BE THEN MORE AND GREATER THAN EVER.** For to this we may apply what is said of him, *Woe to the Inhabitants of the Earth, for the Devil is come down unto you, having great Wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.* And accordingly we may expect that he will apply his temptations now more vigorously than ever; for if he discharges this last part effectually, they are utterly lost and gone, and he has gain'd them for ever. Wherefore he may be supposed now to set all his Engines on work, and to ply it closely, He takes all the advantages that may be of these extream and difficult circumstances; herein he tempts us to fretfulness and impatience under God's hand, to a distrust or despair of his Goodness. *Dost thou still retain thy Integrity? Curse God and die.* If this will Rev. 12. Job. 2. 9.

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will not do, he tempts us with too great presumption on the Divine Goodness, to a neglect of due Examination and Repentance of our Sins; or distracts our thoughts with Secular Affairs: One way or other, he either keeps us from the Duties requisite for that State, or endeavours to make us increase our Sin in it. Most certain it is, that the Devil doth now hope, and Industriouslly watch, for his Prey; the last effect of his Malice and Revenge. The case here may be somewhat likened to that mentioned of him, *Rev. 12. 4. The Dragon stood before the Woman that was ready to be Delivered, for to devour the Child as soon as it was born.* But may our Souls escape like that, and be caught up unto God and to his Throne.

Ver. 5.

Sixthly, A dying State or Condition, is rendered very dreadful and terrible **FROM THE THOUGHTS OR CONVICTION OF AN AFTER ACCOUNT OR JUDGMENT.** The Prisoner when going to his Trial, hath all along every step he takes, very strange and perplexing thoughts, and is beyond expression troubled and uneasie within himself. And what must the case be with Men, when on the confines of another World, to think of that great and impartial Judgment and Tribunal, before which they are now summon'd to appear? And how must it effect and cut them, to consider that they are now hastening to the presence of that Righteous and Almighty Judge, who shall strictly examine every thought and *idle World, before whom all things are naked and open?* To consider that after *Death* comes *Judgment*, is that which makes a dying State the most Serious and weighty matter in the whole World. What concernment and anxiety must a man truly considerative, have at such a time? I am dying, I am departing; that is,

is, in other terms, I am called to give up my Accompts; I am going to be Judged before the Great God; behold, what Matter so weighty, what Concernment comparable to this? This single Consideration duly weighed, renders such circumstances very straight and terrible: No other can be the genuine effect of Mens thorough Belief and Conviction (at that time) of an approaching Judgment.

But we have sufficiently represented the black and tragical part, it may be high time now to draw the Curtain, and set forth a fairer Scene. Well then, notwithstanding a dying condition is thus severe and terrible, yet we have particular, extraordinary supports and comforts under it. *Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR THOU ART WITH ME,* to assist me in these straights and necessities, and to afford suitable Helps and Advantages under them. And now those great Supports which God doth give us in these most difficult circumstances, may be considered under these following Particulars.

First, The thoughts of this State; as the Appointment of God.

Secondly, That God is therein peculiarly present with us, and gives us extraordinary helps and assistances of his Divine Care and Goodness.

Thirdly, The near approach to Heaven and Happiness.

Fourthly, the Consideration of Christ's Death and Sufferings.

Fifthly, The Belief and Expectation of a future Resurrection.

Sixthly, The Promise and Assurance of Pardon and Forgiveness.

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Seventhly, The Attendance of God's Holy Angels that are ready to receive our Souls.

Which duly and seriously consider'd, will abundantly qualify and remove all the Terroures and Difficulties of a dying State.

First, *It is a very great Support at that time to consider, That the STATE WE ARE NOW BROUGHT TO, IS ACCORDING TO THE DETERMINATE ORDER AND ALLOTMENT OF GOD*, in whom we live and move, and have our Being. He is the Breath of our Nostrils, he put our Souls into these Tabernacles, and we are here only Tenants at Will, liable to be dispossest'd at Pleasure. And when we consider, that *'tis appointed for all men once to die*, and that it is an irrevocable Decree of Heaven, that we *MUST all walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death*, why should we fear any Evil? Be dismay'd or terrified, at that which is the will and pleasure of the Almighty, as if some strange and unexpected accident did befall us? For may we not hereupon say with the Apostle, *That no man should be moved with these afflictions, for your selves know that we are appointed thereunto*. Is not God's hand in my suffering? Is it not in my death? 'Tis an undoubted mitigation even of this sorrow and affliction, to consider that God hath appointed it as the unavoidable Lot and Portion of all Men living; so that, on this account, we may say, *I will fear no evil, for thou art with me*.

Secondly, In our dying State or Circumstances, *GOD IS PECULIARLY PRESENT WITH US, AND GIVES US EXTRAORDINARY HELPS AND ASSISTANCES OF HIS CARE AND GOODNESS*. *Thou art with me*. That Providence which is always vigilant over us, hath then a more deep and special regard and concern for us. Are the very *Hairs*
of

of our Head all number'd? And doth his Care extend so far, as that one of these *shall not fall to the ground*, but by the permission of our Heavenly Father? May we not hence justly conclude, that he is peculiarly careful of us in such danger and extremity as this? *Thou art with me*; it is render'd *Penes me, in loco quo sto*, Thou art near at hand, in the very place where I am, not as an indifferent unconcern'd Spectator, but to be a *very present help in trouble*. Then this our good God is with us, to comfort our Souls, to support our Spirits, to ease our Pain, and give us patience under it; to soften our cares, to mitigate the pangs and terrors of Death; then the *Eternal God is thy Refuge*, and underneath are the *everlasting Arms*. Such a mighty care of God over us, Deut. 33- holy David was abundantly sensible of, and doth express very passionately, *Thou art about my path, and about my bed. The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. Thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* Psal. 41- The Hebrew word signifies *turn*. *Thou wilt turn all his bed in his sickness*, as it were to make him lie more soft and easie. And he seems to have an undoubted reference hereunto, by what presently follows in this verse: *Thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* At quid *adferunt solatii virga & baculus? adferunt & quidem plurimum*, saith Erasmus ingeniously upon it, What comfort doth the rod and staff here import? A great deal; *adversus latrocinia demonum hoc molientium*, They are those Instruments whereby this great Shepherd doth defend his Flock from the rage and malice of the Devils, that wait to devour us. I am not ignorant, saith he, that some of the Ancients, by the Rod here, understand *some light affliction*, wherewith God doth Chastize; by the staff, some more severe and heavy

Judg-

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‘ Judgment, whereby he doth punish his People. An
 ‘ Opinion, though very pious, yet not so proper for this
 ‘ place; for observe, saith he, the *Psalmist* doth not say,
 ‘ *My rod and staff*, but *thy rod and thy staff*, and therein
 ‘ speaks more agreeably, to the Metaphor here of God’s
 ‘ being a Pastor; and so we may take the *rod* and the
 ‘ *staff* here according to what is usual in Scripture, the
 ‘ *rod* may be his *assisting Grace*, the *staff* our *Defence* a-
 ‘ gainst our ravenous Enemy. *Hæc virga pastoris Jesu,*
 ‘ *hic baculus solatio sunt gregi imbecilli adversus terrores*
 ‘ *omnium malorum.* ‘ This *rod*, this *staff* of the *shepherd*
 ‘ of our souls, *Christ Jesus*, will be our protection and
 ‘ security against all kind of evil. *St. Paul*, saith he,
 ‘ mentions the *fiery Darts of the Devil*; these *Christ*
 ‘ keeps from us with his *staff* here mentioned: *Hoc*
 ‘ *an non magnum interim militaris itineris solatium.* And
 ‘ is not this by the way, a great encouragement of our
 ‘ Warlike State? How dearly doth our Lord *Jesus*
 ‘ love us, who, as you see, will neglect nothing that
 ‘ may any wise conduce to our Protection, our Re-
 ‘ freshment, and our Comfort? Thus far he, which
 ‘ I have the longer insisted on, because it is such a ge-
 ‘ nuine, though unusual Interpretation, and a seasona-
 ‘ ble representation of God’s so great, and peculiar care,
 ‘ and regard for us, in this most straight and difficult
 ‘ condition.

To sum up this Head; as nothing is surer than the
 day of Death, and our Departure out of this Earthly
 Body, which very likely may be attended with black-
 ness and terror, with dreadful Pains, and Agonies, too
 great to be express; yet I may comfortably say, that
 herein the Lord is my helper; yea, though I walk thro’
 this Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil,
 for thou art with me. Tho’ the Arrows of the Almighty
 stick fast in me, and his Hand presseth me sore; though
 my

my condition be painful and tormenting, and I be stretch'd upon my Bed with Grief and Anguish, and my Friends about me lament to think *that the place which now seeth me, shall see me no more*, notwithstanding the Decree is past, *That God hath number'd my Life and finished it*, and I am now beset with gloominess and darkness, mine Eye-balls rowl, and my Soul is just on the wing, ready to take its flight into the unknown Regions of the other World, *Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand, thou shalt guide me with thy Council, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. My Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* Which brings us to another thing that will relieve and comfort us, in a dying State and Condition: And that is,

Thirdly, **THE THOUGHTS OR CONSIDERATION OF OUR NEAR APPROACH TO HAPPINESS AND GLORY.** Having hitherto run the race that is set before us, We may expect greater sweats and troubles, and to be more tired, the nearer we come to the end of it. But this is the last Stage; if we can bear up under this only remaining difficulty, the day and the prize is ours; we may go on with Patience *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith.* How must it incourage our endeavours, and support our Spirits, under the sorest pressure of Death it self, to behold, *with an Eye of faith, the Glory ready to be revealed*, and to see our Lord, with open arms, ready to receive us? Come, bear up under this, and as it is your worst, it is your very last trial. There

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- are blessed Mansions prepared for you, *where there*
 Rev. 2. 4. *shall be no more Death, neither sorrow, nor crying; nei-*
ther shall there be any more pain, for the former things
are passed away. Tho it may not seem consistent
 with what I have already deliver'd, to lessen the sad
 and sorrowful circumstances of our dying hours, yet
 I may say, that if our Souls be duly fixed on Hea-
 ven and Eternity, it must in a great measure abate,
 and will, I'm sure, outweigh the worst that can be
 said or conceived of that State. This is able to
 out-balance the utmost Tyranny of Pains and Agonies,
 and to dispel all Clouds and Melancholy from our
 minds. The Night is come, but it brings us to the
 dawn of Eternity, and *that shadow of Death* is the
 confine of the days of Heaven. *Yet a little while,* and
 we are gone into *YONDER* World; and must it not
 be a mighty satisfaction to us now, to say with the
 2. Cor. 5. Apostle, *We know that if our earthly House of this*
Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God,
an House not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens.
 To think that the pain will be over in a short time,
 is some ease to my mind in the greatest Affli-
 ction; but to add, and consider withal, that it will
 be presently succeeded with *Joy unspeakable and full of*
glory, must administer to our Souls the highest con-
 solation. *I will fear no evil, for thou art with me;*
 to say farther, and I shall be with thee, be transferred to
 that blisful State, to the presence of God, *where there*
 Psa. 16. 11. *is fullness of joys, and pleasures for ever,* is my most
 unspeakable support, and the very height of comfort
 Eccl. 12. and satisfaction, *The Tears draw nigh in which thou shalt*
say I have no pleasure in them, while the Sun, or the Light,
or the Moon, or the Stars, are darkened. In the day when
the Keepers of the house shall tremble. Also when they shall
be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the
way

way. The Silver Cord is loosed. Observe, upon that melancholy, and tho' Elegant description, of our dying condition, *Soloman* subjoyns us a comfort against the dismal thoughts of those sad circumstances, and against Death it self; the consideration of our acceptance with God in the Immortal State, *Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit shall return to God who gave it.* In a word, this single consideration, that we *shall ever be with the Lord*, duly weighed and rely'd on, will abundantly relieve and support us against all the Powers of Death, in its most horrid and ghastly apperances, and sufficiently subdue the great difficulties of the dying State.

Fourthly, This is again render'd further easie and supportable **FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND SUFFERINGS**; not only as they do expiate our Sins, and so bring comfort to our Souls, as we may have occasion to shew presently, but withal, upon the account of his great and glorious conquest over Death and the Grave, which he vanquished and subdu'd, in the very worst, and most horrid circumstances, that they might have less power, and exercise less Tyranny over us. Whereupon the Apostle triumphantly speaks, *Death is swallowed up in Victory.* 1. Cor. 15.
Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 54.

To consider that Christ our Lord underwent the same before us, and in a more dismal manner than we are able to bear or imagine, is some mitigation in this most sorrowful condition; considering withal, that in doing so, he hath made the way more smooth and passable for us. Death spent his most fiery Darts on him, and he hath so subdu'd his greatest strength
and

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and utmost power, that he either cannot, or dare not be over severe and rigorous with us; at least, he can go no further than he will permit him, *I am he that liervh and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore,*

Rev. 1. 13. Amen: *And have the Keys of Hell and of Death.*

Death is now purely under Christs command, and can do nothing but by leave from him; and therefore, we may justly hope that our gracious Lord will not suffer him to exert his utmost fury upon us. How suitable then is that pious Prayer of our Church at this season: *O Saviour of the World, who by thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.*

Visitation
of the Sick.

Fifthly, the troubles and Sorrows of a dying State, are again very much abated and subdu'd *FROM THE THOUGHTS OF A FUTURE RESURRECTION*, which will satisfy our Minds and make abundant amends for all the doubts or troubles that do now attend us. What though we suffer under pains, and may be grieved to think that part of us shall be the Prey of Worms and Corruption, yet the belief of this truth will soon dispel the sorrows that arise from thence. The time is coming (and Lord, what joy is it in these straits?) when my Soul now returning to God, shall meet this Body again glorious and refin'd, never more to be vext with, or separated from it. *This shadow of Death*, and that sorrowful Night, that is now beset with Clouds and horror, will conduct us to the morn of our Resurrection; and how can we be *sorrowful as Men without hope?* This our Church looks upon as the most comfortable support, for the consideration of our own, or others dissolution, when in its great Prudence and Piety, it appoints that Lesson concerning the great Article of the Resurrection

in the Burial Service, a Doctrin if rightly fix'd and believ'd, that will render us *stedfast and unmoveable* in the deepest sorrows. *Thy Brother shall rise again,* Job. 11. 23. was the comfort our Saviour gave to *Mary*, and is such as will be able to bear up our Spirits, even in the heaviest Tryals of a Dying State. For how must it support me and others, at that time, to speak after this, or the like manner? 'You behold me, Brethren, seemingly forsaken and distress'd; and, indeed, *My Complaint is bitter, for my Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and my stroke is heavier than my groanings.* But yet I would have you believe and think as 'I do, that I am only to withdraw for a small season; and 'as the Prophet speaks, to enter into my Chambers, and 'shut my Doors about me, and to hide my self, as it were, *Isai. 26. 20* 'for a little moment, for thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. And thereupon, observe what followeth: *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.* This long and solemn parting may cause grief in our hearts, and tears in our eyes; but shall we not be comforted, considering the time is coming, in which, *All that are in the Graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth?* St. Matth. 5. 28.

Sixthly, The Terrours of a dying State are mightily qualified and abated, **FROM GOD'S MOST COMFORTABLE PROMISE AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND FORGIVENESS.** The greatest and the truest sorrow of a dying State, is that which is occasion'd from the sense of Sin & Guilt: *Hinc ille Lachryma.* This is the cause of our chiefest trouble and uneasiness at that time, and very justly too, for it is the most dismal fate as ever was threatned; *Ye shall dye in your sins.* But St. John, when I come with a message of Pardon and Forgiveness, and this be rightly receiv'd and well grounded, 8. 24. then 'tis, *Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.* St. Matth. 9. 2.

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To be convinc'd that I have made my peace with God, and that my Pardon is sealed in Heaven, this will strengthen us in the midst of sorrows, even to the defiance of all pain and anguish: Instead of complaints, we may hereupon joyfully say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace.* I do neither care nor value what I suffer, so I be reconciled to God, and have my sins wash'd away by the Blood of Christ. And such may be the State of every one of us, for upon a sincere Faith and hearty Repentance, *God will have mercy upon us, and abundantly pardon. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* This blessed Promise takes away the sting of Death, and puts us beyond the reach of its Terrour and Malignity; and therefore our Church may well prescribe it as the great, or only Comfort, and Security, in such a State or Condition. Thus saying, *The Almighty Lord, who is a most strong Tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in Heaven, in Earth, and under the Earth, do bow and obey, be now and evermore thy Defence, and make thee know and feel, that there is no other name under Heaven given to Man, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Visitat. of
Sick.

The Seventh, and Last Comfortable Consideration that we have against the great sorrows of Death, is, **THE ATTENDANCE OF GODS HOLY ANGELS READY TO RECEIVE OUR SOULS, AND TO CONDUCT THEM INTO THE MANSION OF THE BLESSED.** For he will give his Angels Charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, certainly then in these, the most difficult of any. For are they not all *Ministring Spirits sent forth to Minister* διὰ τὰς μέσους *for them that shall, or are ready to inherit Salvation?*

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The Blessed God, whose Instruments the Angels are (and who is therefore alone to be ador'd for it) hath out of wonderful condescension towards us, assign'd those glorious happy Beings, for our Safety and Protection in our dying Streights and Difficulties. For the Holy Scripture tells us, They carryed *Lazarus* his Soul St. Luke, 16. 22. into *Abraham's bosom*. And in our Saviour's Dreadful Agonies, *there appeared an Angel unto him from Heaven* St. Luke, 22. 43. strengthening him. And if such were able to bring him Relief in his Circumstances, they may well do it to ours, which at the worst, come vastly short of his sorrowful Death and Passion. Why now should we be amaz'd, and terrified at the thoughts or approach of that most serious and solemn hour? *Why art thou so heavy, O my Soul? And why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God.* He and his Blessed Angels continually watch over us for good. God in the ways we have heard, or others, as he knows best, *Will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come on all the World.* Rev. 3. 10. God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble: *Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved.* Pf. 46. 1. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

In all time of our Tribulation, in the hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment, Good Lord deliver us.

F I N I S.